

A Bad Record and A Bad Heart

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John chapter 3. I'll be reading the first 21 verses and then we're going to skip over to verse 36.

John chapter 3. Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.

He came to Jesus at night and said, Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.

And replied, Jesus declared, I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. How can a man be born when he is old? Nicodemus asked.

Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born. Jesus answered, I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

[1 : 19] Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying you must be born again. The wind blows wherever it pleases.

You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit. How can this be? Nicodemus asked.

You are Israel's teacher, said Jesus, and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.

I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe. How then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven, the Son of Man.

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

[2 : 32] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

This is the verdict. Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light, because their deeds were evil.

Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.

In verse 36, whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

In medicine, a proper diagnosis of the problem is critical to prescribing the right remedy for it, and a misdiagnosis could be lethal.

[3 : 58] If the cause of abdominal pain is pancreatic cancer, it would be deadly to treat it as mere indigestion. In other words, we need to know what's wrong in order that we might put it right.

And the same thing is true, not only in the physical condition, but in our spiritual condition with our Maker, the Almighty, the Eternal God. Now, sadly, the world, by its wisdom, does not know God, and so it doesn't know what's wrong with mankind.

That something is wrong is clear to all, but what is wrong that befuddles man. They don't understand man's deepest problems, for our greatest problems are not physical at all.

They're not financial, racial, political, international, or horizontal in any dimension. Man's greatest problems are spiritual.

Something is deadly wrong in our vertical relationship with God, our Maker. So I'm not here to tell you what I think, to give my diagnosis of the problem.

[5 : 13] What we all need to know is what God thinks. What does He say about us? What does He tell us in His Word that is wrong with man? Well, He who made us, therefore, knows us, and He knows us better than we know ourselves, and so we're right to listen to His Word.

And according to God's own diagnosis, I want to point out two things that He says are wrong with us. And He does tell us, in order that we might be put right with Him and be saved from eternal loss, our two problems are a bad record in heaven and a bad heart on earth.

So let's consider God's diagnosis then of our problems and then His own remedy for them. First, our bad record. In our country, a bad record is something you get for your violation of the laws of the land.

And people who have violated the laws and therefore have a record with the law may have trouble in their life getting a job and winning trust from other people.

And in a similar way, every sin that we've committed goes on our record in heaven. We each have a record before God, the lawgiver.

[6 : 40] You see, the God who made us has authority over us. Since He's the Maker, He has the authority to command us what to do and what not to do. And He has done just that.

We think of His commandments, the Ten Commandments, as a summary of God's moral law of what He expects of man. And those Ten Commandments have been further summarized into two great commandments.

To love the Lord our God with all of our heart and soul and mind and strength and then to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Those two commandments sum up all the commands that God has required of us.

So to love God with all of our hearts means to have no other gods besides Him. To make no idols in the shape of anything and to worship them.

To not misuse His name and to not misuse His day. To love our neighbor as ourselves, well that's, children, that means that you honor father and mother, your nearest neighbor and all other authorities that God has ordained in this world.

[7 : 52] It means that you don't take your neighbor's life or your neighbor's spouse or your neighbor's things or your neighbor's good word, good name, reputation and that you don't even covet what is your neighbor's.

These are some of God's laws and what it means that He expects us to obey these. He's our maker and has the right to give us such laws.

They are good. They are holy. They are righteous laws just like God Himself is good and holy and righteous. But what have we done with these good laws of God?

What have you done with them? Well, we've all broken them. And that's the definition of sin. Sin is a common word that is in our English language.

What does it mean? Well, sin is the breaking of God's law. It's the flaunting of His authority. Doing what He forbids and not doing what He commands.

[8 : 53] And that's true of every one of us. If you've got your Bibles, turn to Romans chapter 3. Romans chapter 3. And in this passage, the Apostle Paul states the fact positively as well as negatively.

He states it, first of all, positively in chapter 3 and verse 23 of Romans. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There's the positive statement.

We have all sinned. And then he states it negatively in chapter 3 and verses 10 through 12. We see God's withering diagnosis of mankind as He examines man.

What is His conclusion? Well, He says there's no one righteous. Not so much as one. To be righteous is to be right.

And not right in your own eyes, but right in God's eyes. To do what is right in His mind, in His eyes, according to His word.

[10 : 00] It's to do what is in line with His righteous commandments that I've just recited for you. That's what it means to be righteous. And not a one of us have ever spent a day loving God with all of our hearts and souls and minds and strength.

And none of us have ever spent a day loving our neighbors in the way that we love ourselves. For all have sinned. There is not one righteous. Not even one.

And then He says there is no one who understands. In other words, our minds are fallen. That's why man doesn't understand what's wrong with man. He doesn't understand his problem.

We have forsaken God's word. And if we have forsaken God's word, what kind of wisdom can we have? The Bible calls it folly. Foolishness.

No one who understands. And there's no one who seeks God. No, we hit the ground running away from God. Indeed, that's what He says. All have turned away.

[11 : 06] Not toward God. Not seeking Him. But away. Fleeing Him. As Isaiah says, we all, like sheep, have gone astray. We've turned each one to His own way.

We've turned the back to God and the face to our way. So I went my way, you went your way. But what they have in common is that neither of them are God's way.

And then it says they have together become worthless. It's a principle in Scripture that we become like what we worship. And so you find often the prophets saying, you're worshipping these worthless idols and you're becoming like them, worthless.

And that's what we are. We're idolaters. We put other things in the place of God and give them God-like status in our life and together we have become worthless. All of us.

And then he says there is not one who does good. Not even one. This language shuts out all exceptions, doesn't it, to his statement.

[12 : 10] All our deeds are shot through with self-interest. They're not done in sincere love toward God with faith in Jesus Christ and aiming at his glory.

That's what makes a good work. And we don't do them that way. We all have sinned. We've all come short. There's not one righteous. No, not even one who does what is good.

So that's God's diagnosis of us all. That's what's wrong with our world and what's wrong with us. So here's the problem God is saying. Here's the disease.

We're all sinners with our backs turned toward God going our own way rebelling against God's rightful authority. But God not only has the authority to make laws which he does and has he also has the authority to enforce his laws and to punish lawbreakers.

And that's what he said he will do as the universal king and judge of all. So our problem is far worse than most realize and here's what I mean.

[13 : 22] People sin and nothing happens. They're not struck down with disease or death. There was no sudden lightning bolt out of heaven. And so they wrongly conclude either God doesn't see or God doesn't care about what I'm doing.

I'm getting away with this. And that's a catastrophic miscalculation. It looks that way. Nobody saw it.

Nobody found me out. I'm getting away with this. And so to correct our misunderstanding God has told us in his word be sure your sin will find you out.

be sure of it. This is not something uncertain. I will by no means clear the guilty. By no means. And he's not talking about whether or not you feel guilty.

You know people can stuff their guilty feelings. People can drink away their guilty feelings. People can just keep busy enough that their guilty feelings aren't felt. No. No when he talks about the guilty he means being liable to punishment.

[14 : 31] Deserving of punishment. punishment. That's what our guilt is before this God. That we deserve to be punished. And he says I'll by no means clear the guilty.

Whatever we may feel or think about what we've done God's serious about punishing it. And just because God does not settle all of his accounts at once doesn't mean he won't settle them at all.

He has set a day when he will judge the world in righteousness. And so it's like this. There's a red traffic light and the law of the land says you must stop on red.

But as you approach the intersection you don't see anyone around so you just cruise right on through the red light. And nothing happens. No sirens. No flashing lights.

And so you think you got away with it. Two weeks later you get a letter in the mail. you need to appear before the traffic judge. Because a camera caught what you did.

[15 : 38] They've got the tape. You've got a bad record. And it requires payment. So it is with the judge of all the earth.

As all will discover. The eyes of the Lord are in every place. Beholding the evil and the good. Nothing is hidden in all creation.

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. So every sin that you've ever committed in thought, word, deed, motive, attitude, it's there on the record.

It's on the record. And you must give an account. A day is coming when the books will be open. Revelation chapter 20 says the books will be open. Your book will be open.

Your page will be turned to and your offenses will be judged according to your record in heaven. For it is appointed unto man once to die and then the judgment.

[16 : 47] Now it's on God's calendar and you'll be there. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. That each one may receive what is due him for the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad.

Second Corinthians 5 10. And what is it that is due us for sin against God? Well, this book of Romans chapter 6 and verse 23 says the wages of sin is death.

That's what you get from sin. You get death and it's not just physical death. It's that second death that Revelation 20 talks about. The lake of fire.

The punishment of hell. And here in Romans 2 and verses 5 and 6, the apostle tells us because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you're storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

God will give to each person according to what he has done. There is a record of what you have done. What is your record in the law books of heaven?

[18 : 04] You say, well, my record's not that bad. Of course, we've all sinned. No one's perfect. But I'm not bad enough to deserve eternal hell. Well, are you a law breaker or a law keeper?

It's the only categories that there are in heaven. At the judge, at the judgment. Law breaker, law keeper. James chapter 2 verse 10.

Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking it all. One breaking of the law makes you a law breaker.

How many bites of the forbidden fruit did it take for Eve and Adam to become law breakers? Just one bite. One act. Stumbling at one point and they were guilty of breaking the whole law of God.

And in the eyes of the judge, you're either a law keeper or a law breaker. God doesn't grade on the curve. He doesn't compare us with others who are worse than us.

[19 : 16] No, you know what he compares us with? It's with his own standard, his own righteous standard, his perfect holiness. That's the standard of the final judgment.

Do you measure up to that standard for heaven? If not, my friend, the consequences are serious and eternal. Galatians chapter three and verse 10.

Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law. There's a curse for everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law.

You see, it is serious. That's all it takes to have a bad record in heaven. The standard is not obeying most of God's laws most of the time, but obeying everything in the law all the time.

A curse on everyone who does not continue to do everything written. And Jesus himself says of these lawbreakers that they will be exposed in that day, they will be judged and sent away to everlasting punishment as he tells them plainly, I never knew you.

[20 : 39] Depart from me, you evil doers. Now that's God's withering diagnosis of us all. We have a bad record in heaven. And judgment day is coming.

So you see, our problem is not small. It's not something that we can fix with just a little doing and we'll be all right. We can't undo our sins. It's a God-sized problem because of who he is, holy and who we are, sinners.

But I hasten to say that our God-sized problem has a God-sized remedy. He is Jesus Christ, God's very own eternal son.

And the father sent him to seek and to save who? Guilty lawbreakers, not the righteous, but sinners. He came to call to repentance. And in order to say guilty lawbreakers, the eternal son of God was born of a woman, just like every one of us.

And he was born under the law. He took our position. He identified with us and became a man who is under God's law.

[21 : 57] And therefore, he owed to his heavenly father obedience, just like we owe it to God. And though he was tempted in every way like we are for 33 years of his life, he did what we didn't do.

He always kept every command of his father. He was without sin, the only perfect log keeper ever to live.

And that means that he has a perfect record in heaven. Everybody else has the bad record, but there's one perfect record and it's his. He lived his whole life perfectly obedient to his father.

He deserves to go to heaven. He deserves to be with his father in heaven forever and ever. And that means he has a righteous record to give to his believing people.

He obeyed the law, which they didn't and couldn't obey. And then he suffered and died the death that they should have and would have died as the penalty for their law breaking.

[23 : 12] You see, since he had no sin, he's the only man who didn't deserve to die under God's wrath. And because he has no sin of his own, he qualifies to be a substitutionary sacrifice in the place of those who have broken God's wall.

I can't die for you. I've got to die to fill my punishment for my sins. I have eternal hell to pay for my sins. I can't, I can't die for you. You can't die for me.

Oh, but here's one who doesn't have any sin. So he doesn't owe God death. He's not under the penalty. So he can take our place and die instead of us and suffer God's wrath instead of us.

And that's the good news of the gospel. That's the remedy that God provided. Paul tells us, tells believers in Galatians 3 and verse 13. that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.

What curse? Well, that curse that's ours because we've not obeyed everything written in the law all the time. And Christ redeemed us. He set us free from that curse. How? By becoming a curse for us.

[24 : 31] So the curse for lawbreakers fell on him, the law keeper. As he took our sin and the damnation for it under God's wrath that we might be forever free from the curse.

For there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. In Christ Jesus. Are you in Christ Jesus? If so, there is no condemnation, no curse for you.

Why not? Because he took it in your place. He became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in heaven. So the remedy for our great problem of a bad record is this great exchange between Jesus and his people.

Rotten, defiled sinners who put their trust in Jesus. What happens? Well, there's my record full of sin. And Jesus puts that over onto his account.

God the Father puts that over on Jesus' account. And he bears those sins to the cross and pays the penalty in full. And Jesus' perfect record, his perfect obedience is transferred over and put onto my account.

[25 : 48] So that when the books are opened in that final day of judgment, what will be seen there for every believer? Where are their sins?

They're gone. They're blotted out by the blood of Jesus. And instead, what's in their place? The record reads, perfect obedience to all the commands of God.

We have a record as if we have personally obeyed every single command, everything, all the time. Because it's Christ's obedience that's put to our account and our bad record put to his account that he was damned for, that we might live with his perfect record.

That's the glory of the gospel. That we all like sheep have gone astray, we've turned each one to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him his own servant son, suffering servant son, Jesus.

He's laid on him the iniquities of us all. And then he punished him in our place. Now that's not true of everyone. That's the sad thing that's being said today.

[26 : 59] As if Jesus does this for everyone, so everyone's saved. No, no. This is for his people. And how do you know if you're one of his people? Well, you repent and believe and you can know that you were chosen in him before the creation of the world.

It's faith in Jesus. It's turning from your sin and coming to Christ that is the mark of God's people. And it is for them that this glorious exchange takes place where he is treated as we deserve and we're treated as he deserved.

He is the I accursed and left alone. I is the I embraced and welcomed home. So what a difference that makes. In the day of death, in the day of judgment, for all believers, when the books will be open.

It's that perfect righteousness of Christ that's credited to my account that will give me entrance into heaven in that day. To be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from my law keeping, because that's filthy rights, but to have a righteousness that is by faith in Jesus Christ, a righteousness that is from God and by faith, that's what will put me in good standing and does put me in good standing today and in that day and for all eternity.

So eternal life costs everything for Christ, but it comes to me as a free gift. He gets the punishment, I get the pardon.

[28 : 35] What a deal is the gospel of the grace of God in Christ. I give him my sinful record, he gives me his righteous record. Now I've seen people lining up to get a good deal, some special deal that's being offered, a fast food restaurant that's offering free sandwiches on a certain day if you show up, and I've seen traffic lined up for blocks to get some free food.

Maybe you've seen shoppers lining up all night long to get the deals for the first shoppers on Black Friday. Free stuff.

But here's the gospel, the deal of all deals. Not free food, not free stuff, but free salvation, free forgiveness, free pardon, free righteous standing with God forever and ever.

Your sinful record traded for his righteous record. Where are the lines? Where are the people lining up to get this deal?

Why aren't they flocking the churches today to hear about this deal of the gospel? people to come to Christ and to cash in on this deal, to close with him, to receive him?

[30 : 02] Where are they? The least trifles have been allowed to distract them and to keep them away from that which in a few more years will be the most coveted thing in all the world to be found in Christ.

Well, the dirty little secret is they don't want to be saved from their sins. That's why they're not flocking and lining up for this deal. They love their sins and don't want to be saved from their sins.

Thank you. They love being their own boss. They love going their own way. Why do you think they turn their back on God in the first place? They love going their own way.

They love calling the shots. They love living the way they want to live. They don't love God and they have no desire to know him and walk in his ways. And this is, you see, the second great problem we all have.

Not only a bad record in heaven, but a bad heart on earth. The heart, the very control center of my whole being, that's bad.

[31 : 15] It's anti-God and pro-self. It's anti-Christ and pro-sin. And though we're still creatures who love, our love has been twisted and turned away from God onto ourselves.

Second Timothy three, one to five gives God's diagnosis. They are lovers of themselves. They are lovers of money. They are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

That's why their backs are to him. They don't love him. They love their own way. Jesus puts us this way in the text that was read for us from John 3, 19 and 20.

This is the verdict. Here's the judge speaking. This is the verdict. Light has come into the world, but men love darkness. You see, it's that love that's twisted.

They love darkness rather than the light that's come into the world. And who is the light of the world that has come? It is Jesus. They don't like light from any source and least of all from the light of the world himself.

[32 : 21] And why? Because their deeds are evil and everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed as if the darkness could hide it from the one to whom darkness is as light.

Oh, he sees. They only deceive themselves that he doesn't. Job says, Job 21, 14, they say to God, leave us alone.

We don't, we have no desire to know your ways. You see, they love their own ways. Exodus 5, 2, they say with Pharaoh, who is the Lord that I should obey him?

I don't know him, so I don't care what he says. Our problem is a great problem. It's not just what we do then. It's what we are.

It's what we are. What we do is sin, but that's because of what we are, sinners at heart.

[33 : 26] It's our nature as sinners to sin, as it is the nature of birds to fly, as it is the nature of fish to swim.

It is the nature of sinners to sin. sin. So the remedy is not try to try a little harder to be good. That's the message being preached in many pulpits today.

You all just go out and do your best now. Try to love your neighbor as yourself. Try to love God a little more. Think a little less of yourself. Be kind.

No, the answer is not try a little harder to be good. That's like telling a fish, try a little harder to fly. The remedy is not get rid of your bad habits, replace them with a few good habits.

It's not just add Christ to your life because things go better with Christ. It's not rearrange the furniture of your life, tidy things up a bit, the trouble is much deeper than that. It goes right to the core of who we are.

[34 : 30] As fallen sinners, we have a fallen sinful nature that loves to sin. And yet we're told in Psalm 24, who may ascend the hill of the Lord, who may stand in his holy place.

That's where I want to be. I want to be with him. I want to be standing in his holy place one day. He who has clean hands and a pure heart. Clean hands and a pure heart.

Your hands clean, not use them for sinful things. pure. Your heart pure. That's our very trouble.

That's the second problem. We've got bad hearts. And it's because our hearts are not pure that our hands are not clean either. It's why we have impure thoughts and impure desires and impure decisions and impure actions.

sins. So our heart's bad. Our heart is unclean. And we can't clean them up ourselves. That's the reality. You know that.

[35 : 40] You've tried time and time again. And you found your sinful desires are too strong for you. You were a slave to your sin. You can't make yourself to hate sin and love holiness.

You can't make yourself love God and his laws instead of yourself and your sins. You've got a wayward heart. And that's what makes your feet wayward.

Away from God and toward your way. It's because of the wayward heart. That we will not walk in God's ways. And that we're ever turning to our own way.

And that's why Nicodemus hears from the son of God. I tell you the truth. You cannot enter the kingdom of God.

You cannot see. You can't even perceive the kingdom of God unless you're born again. Born again. You must be born again.

[36 : 42] Our need is not a little self improvement. We need to start all over. We need to be born all over again. A new beginning with a new heart. You must be born again.

man. And that's not something you do to yourself. None of us birthed ourselves. We were born. And we must be born. Born of the Spirit.

Born of the Spirit of God. We can't make ourselves alive to God. We're dead spiritually. We must be born by the Spirit of God.

He must change you. So you need a new birth. You got a bad heart? You need a new birth. You need to start all over. You need a new creation. You need to be created all over again.

And 2 Corinthians 5.17 says that if any man be in Christ he is a new creation. The old is gone. Behold. Behold. Step aside and see this wonder.

[37 : 46] All things are made new. Nothing's the same. In Christ. Christ. A new creation. The world's different. My view of sin is different.

My view of myself. My view of Christ. My view of the way that I should be going. It's all different. It's all new. A new creation. This is what the slave said about his master when his master was converted.

Well he looks the same on the outside but I can tell you he's a different man on the inside. He's not the same. something's happened. He's a changed man.

Yes he was a new creation in Christ Jesus. I heard from a missionary friend who told me he was recently at the house of a couple for lunch and the wife said in front of her husband there at the table.

For 17 years he beat me and locked me up for long periods. And then one day he came home after a friend had invited him to a Christian meeting and tearfully asked forgiveness and told me solemnly that he would never do such things as that to me again.

[38 : 54] He said I didn't believe him. 17 years of it. I didn't believe him. But she said six weeks later I called my mother in law and I said your son is completely changed.

Completely changed. The wife went on to say but despite the change for two years I was furious at him for all that he had done to me. And then finally I too came to Christ.

And I forgave my husband. I was changed. The mother in law was sitting there at the table that evening. And she piped up at the end and said how that she also had come to Christ as the result of the changed lives of her son and her daughter in law.

If anyone is in Christ he she is a new creation. The old is gone. The new has come. They didn't change themselves. A new creation by God.

A new birth. And this you see is God's remedy for our bad hearts. Just as the remedy for our bad records is God's perfect son Jesus Christ and his perfect record for us.

[40 : 13] So the remedy for our bad hearts is that he must give us new birth. A new creation. A new heart.

A clean heart. I need a clean heart. But mine's dirty. Oh create in me a clean heart. Oh God.

Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean. Wash me. You wash me. You cleanse me and I will be whiter than snow. You see there is a remedy for a bad heart.

And this is the gospel that was preached way back in Ezekiel 36 25 to 27 where God says I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.

You can cleanse yourself. But I will cleanse you. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.

[41 : 13] I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and to be careful to keep my laws.

These are the things I will do. Jehovah says you need them done. You can't do them. But I can and I will for all my people all who come to me.

I will do these things. Our God performs heart transplants. So conversion is not the turning over of a new leaf.

It's the receiving of a new heart. The whole heart has to be changed. He takes out the heart that's as hard as stone toward God. God speaks and it just bounces right off of that stony heart.

Don't do this John bounce bounce do this John bounce heart of stone and he takes out that heart of stone and he puts in a soft heart of flesh that receives the impression of God's word.

[42 : 17] Yes. Yes. God your way not my way. Oh Lord. And I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and to be careful to keep my laws.

I'll make law keepers out of you lawbreakers and I'll do it by putting my spirit in you. My spirit. The same spirit by which Christ obeyed every command.

That spirit he puts into the hearts of his people and moves them to be careful to keep his laws. Not perfectly but carefully. Our God performs heart transplants.

That's the good news. You know when you have a bad physical heart. I'm talking about that pump in your chest. When you've got a bad physical heart it affects everything doesn't it?

You can't think straight. You're short winded. You have no stamina. Your other organs suffer. They're not getting what they need from the heart.

[43 : 18] The control there. The heart. That vital organ. And it's the same in the spiritual realm. You see when the heart's bad everything's bad. Because it's out of the heart that the mouth speaks.

It's out of the heart that the hands move. And the mind thinks. And the affections want and don't want. And the will decides. It's the heart. And when it's bad everything's bad.

It's the cause of every sin. This bad heart. But when God miraculously changes the heart. Nothing's the same. All things become new. New.

I love Hosea chapter 14 and verse 4 where the great physician says I will heal their waywardness and love them freely. I will heal their waywardness.

Remember we talked about the heart. What's wrong with it? It's a wayward heart. God says go this way and we go wayward. And that's why we have wayward feet.

[44 : 19] Because we got a wayward heart. And God says I will heal your wayward heart. And when God heals the wayward heart we then walk in his ways. Indeed Psalm 119 and verse 32 the healed heart speaks altogether different.

I run in the way of your commands for you have set my heart free. I was a slave to sin in my heart but when you set my heart free now I run in the ways of your laws.

I delight in your laws oh Lord. after the inward man. The heart transplant. A new birth. A new creation. A new heart.

A clean heart. So that's the remedy to our second great problem of a bad heart. What I want you to see this morning is that though the problems are yours the remedies are God's.

We made ourselves sick by turning away from God. God's. And he pursues us with the only remedy that will save us. Now that's amazing grace. He sends his son to die for our bad record and to give us his righteous record.

[45 : 31] And he sends his Holy Spirit to change our bad hearts and to give us good hearts that love him in his ways. So the diagnosis is grim. Bad record.

Bad heart. And judgment to come for it. You know that's offensive to pride self-sufficient hearts. Proud self-sufficient hearts.

They don't like that message. They've got better things to say of themselves. But our great physician is kind enough to tell us the truth as bad as it is. Isn't that the kind of doctor you want?

Give it to me straight. And that's the only way the great physician gives it to us. And why does he do that? Why does he tell us about our bad record and our bad hearts for which we're headed to hell?

And rightly so. And in that day we will agree. There will be no complaining in the day of judgment. Every mouth will be stopped. Why? Because it will be seen to be right.

[46 : 32] That's exactly right. He's doing what's right. Why is he giving us the truth straight up? Because he wants us to seek him for the remedy.

He knows if we don't know how bad our problem is we won't seek this radical remedy that is found in Christ alone. And so he's not sugar coated our diagnosis.

He's not given us false hope that would end up disappointing us in the day of judgment. But he's given us the only real hope that a sinner ever has.

A salvation that is entirely of the Lord from beginning to end. That's his doing not ours. Jesus Christ the perfect match for sinners.

He has everything you need. You've got a bad heart and need a new one. He's got it. He you've got a bad record and he's got a perfect record. What a match for sinners. What more could you want in a savior than that is not found in Jesus Christ?

[47 : 39] Is he yours? Have you come to him? Have you come asking him to save you? If not, you are your own worst enemy. For if you refuse to come to Christ for life, you drive away the only one who can do helpless sinners good.

It's Jesus. Beloved brother Roger Cryan likes to take men up into the wild north land and camp in the open air and live off the land or whatever they do up there.

But on one trip, his wife, Carol, said it seems like every time he goes away, something bad happens. And that time it was chickens.

A hawk had swooped down and killed one and the rest were in danger of the same fate. So Carol and Jody went out to chase them into the coop, the place of safety.

And if I have my story right, it took the better part of an hour to get that job done. Because it seems that the more earnest they were in chasing them, they were the more frantic to get away from them and not running into the coop but all around their barnyard there.

[49 : 04] Sinners are like silly chickens. who ran from the very ones out to save them. You see, the wrath of God is real.

And it's coming for all. All with a bad heart and a bad record. And God so loved and pitied this world and their sin that he sent his one and only son to seek and to save sinners.

And he's coming again this morning. You know, he comes every time his gospel is preached. Jesus is present making the same offer again.

Again. Come to me. Come to me. All who are weary and heavy, come to me. I'll give you soul rest. To know you're right with God because you now have a record in heaven that's perfect.

The righteousness of Jesus. Oh, peace to the soul. That's a peace to die with. That's a peace to live with. And in fact, if you're not ready to die, you're not ready to live another day.

[50 : 15] And so he's come. He's come this morning offering himself in the gospel. His arms are wide open. And he's pursuing you.

Not to smash you. Not to condemn you. But to embrace you. To welcome you. To save you. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world.

But that the world through him might be saved. So don't misunderstand his heart. The Lord Jesus is pursuing you again with open arms. And his heart is stated for us in Matthew's gospel, chapter 23, how often he says, I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

But you were not willing. Oh, I would gather you. I don't want to see you perish. I don't want to see you destroyed. Oh, that you would repent, turn and live.

So stop running from the only one that can save you. Stop. Repent. Turn. Forsake that way and run into his arms and he will save you.

[51 : 28] And you'll have a new record in heaven. And a new heart on earth. And a new life to live. A new love. A new joy. And a new peace with God.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's pray. Amen. Father, this is something out of our realm.

We never would give a son to die for an enemy that hated us. So by your Holy Spirit, please open our eyes.

Open the eyes of our heart to understand more of this love that you've demonstrated in Christ. And to see the way that you've chased us down through the seven seas of this world.

To land us into the boat of salvation. What a kind and a gracious Savior you are, Lord Jesus. To not be put off by all of our refusals and rejections.

[52 : 33] Thank you. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for coming to our hearts and making them new. Thank you for opening our eyes to our problems, our greatest problems.

And thank you for the solutions that we find in Jesus Christ. Make that precious to some sinner this morning. And we will give you praise. Are you not glorified in the salvation of the lost?

Do that today for your great glory and for their everlasting good. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.